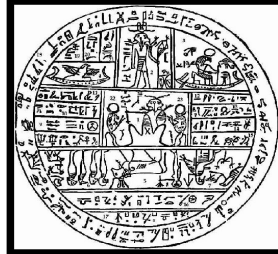


# THE NEW EXPOSITOR



OCTOBER 2008 NO. 7

## LEADERSHIP AND BELIEF

By Richard Packham

When Mormons finally realize that Mormonism does not live up to its claims, and that Mormon leaders have concealed many facts about the history of the church, they often ask, "Are the Mormon leaders "true believers," or do they know the facts and yet continue to be deceivers?"

How can anyone know what is in the mind and heart of someone else? All we can do is guess. It would be quite presumptuous for anyone to say that any of the present General Authorities are conscious of lying, even when they are making statements that are false. Here's my theory (and it's only a theory — there is no way to test it that I can think of):

Every Mormon, whether a convert or born in the church, starts out by accepting Mormonism as true. That is the basic premise: "The church is true. Joseph Smith was a prophet." Therefore, anything that contradicts or casts doubt on the basic premise must be false, and there is presumably a good explanation for why it doesn't *look* false (whether you can find the explanation or not). Those who have a strong testimony of the truth of the Mormon gospel naturally advance in the church. Nobody advances if they express doubts or if they ask too many questions. Every General Authority in the history of the church (except for the very few who were excommunicated or who apostatized) has achieved that distinction by strengthening (and continually bearing) his testimony and the testimony of others.

What happens, then, when some embarrassing historical fact or doctrinal contradiction surfaces? The General Authorities are not historians, nor are they theologians (except in the most amateur sense of the word), nor are they scientists. So how does the current Prophet deal with some sci-

entific fact, such as the assertions about the DNA evidence showing that the Indians are not Israelites? He turns it over to a scientist at BYU and asks *him* to deal with it. Now, put yourself in the position of that BYU scientist. Are you going to tell the president of the church that the Book of Mormon is wrong about the origin of the American Indians? Of course not — you would lose your job, your temple recommend, your church membership, and probably your wife. So you rack your brain to come up with some spin on the evidence that the Prophet will like. And you finally come up with some off-the-wall pro-Mormon explanation and write a very long report, with dozens or hundreds of footnotes. The President doesn't read through the entire report. He doesn't have the time. All he's interested in is the conclusion, so he reads that. And he is relieved that everything is OK, his testimony is strengthened, and he can state publicly, in all good conscience, that the DNA is not a problem for the Book of Mormon because a top scientist at BYU has told him so.

Obviously the leaders think that they are receiving revelation. They firmly believe that, because by definition they are *supposed* to receive revelation. So they interpret any idea, any hunch, any flash of imagination as revelation from God. Every such idea or hunch, then, confirms their belief that they are receiving revelation.

They studiously avoid asking embarrassing questions of themselves or of their colleagues, because they know that that is the first step to apostasy, and the sign of a weak testimony. And they firmly believe that their primary job is to be a model for the members of the church. (Gordon B. Hinckley even stated that in a public interview, saying nothing about receiving "revelation.") They are busy running the organization.



### *Who we are*

We are a diverse community of former Mormons or questioning Mormons. Many of us have been church leaders, missionaries, teachers, and faithful members, and we are here to support those who, like ourselves, are creating a life after Mormonism.

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They believe in the advice that they give to doubting members: Surely there is a suitable answer somewhere, but it is not necessary for your salvation — all our questions and puzzlements will be satisfied in the next life. Meanwhile, pray, study the scriptures, attend your meetings and fulfill your callings.

So, my guess is that the leaders really believe it because they refuse to acknowledge or investigate any evidence to the contrary with an open mind. That does not excuse them morally, of course. In the law, for example, you are responsible for what you know but also for what you *should* know after exercising "reasonable diligence" to find out the truth.

I think that Joseph Smith, on the other hand, knew from the beginning that he was lying. He may have ultimately convinced himself that he was telling the truth, or that God really was helping him, but, again, he should have been more honest with himself and his followers.

Lying is a complex phenomenon. Once a liar gets good at it, he doesn't think of it as lying any more, especially if people believe him. And the fact that some people *do* believe him tends to persuade the liar to think that what he is saying is true, because other people acknowledge it as true. This was the attitude of Mark Hofmann, who produced forged historical documents and sold them to the church and to antique dealers. His attitude was that if he presented a forgery to the experts and they certified it as genuine, then it *was* genuine.

## **HOW TO JOIN OR DONATE TO THE FOUNDATION**

**Membership in the Exmormon Foundation is open to everyone interested in Mormonism. Annual dues are \$20 per person, or \$35 for two persons at the same address.**

**The Foundation is an IRS Tax-Exempt Organization, and all donations made to the Foundation are fully deductible as charitable gifts. We welcome contributions of any size, and commit to using the funds carefully and efficiently in advertising our presence and supporting people in their journey out of Mormonism. Donations or dues can be sent to:**

**The Exmormon Foundation**

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# MORMON OR “MORMON”

By Dr. Marcello Jun de Oliveira



*Marcello Jun de Oliveira is a Facial Plastic Surgeon in Sao Paulo, Brazil.*

I AM a Mormon. I was born and raised in the Mormon tradition, a third generation member of the LDS Church. My grandmother was a poor Japanese immigrant in Southeastern Brazil when she met the LDS missionaries

There are many kinds of Mormons, probably as many as there are people. Salt Lake Tribune columnist Robert Kirby mentions *Nazi Mormons, Liberal Mormons, Conservative Mormons, Orthodox Mormons, and Genuine Mormons*. Historian Michael Quinn describes himself as a *DNA Mormon*. Allow me to qualify my own personal strand of Mormonism, and briefly mention how I got here.

As a teenager, I experienced life as a distinct religious minority in a Catholic culture. This sense of minority status played a role in solidifying my childhood faith. The perceived cultural isolation from the broader society only served to strengthen ties, deepen feelings of co-dependency, and foster a sense of belonging within the LDS community.

Intellectual exchanges with people from diverse traditions, raised issues deserving further pondering, and throughout my adolescence I struggled to educate myself better on the religion that so defined my life. Conservative doctrinal expositions, such as McConkie's and Fielding Smith's were easy to come by, and in my early teens, such facile literature sufficed. As intellectual maturity forced itself upon me, I struggled to lay hold of more mature reading.

Then I found the book that introduced me to an academic generation of Mormon studies I never knew existed. Hansen's *Quest for Empire* discussed the Council of Fifty and the political ramifications of Smith's and Young's kingdom building. For the first time all of those Mormon vs. non-Mormon tensions and hostilities in our heritage made sense! I was thrilled. I began to invest what little resources I could muster to acquire more reading materials. Brooks on the Mountain Meadows Massacre, Arrington on Brigham Young, Bushman on Joseph Smith, each reading opened my understanding of my Mormon heritage to new depths.

Throughout this period of discovery, I maintained a happy and active LDS existence. I volunteered cheerfully for a full-

time mission, and despite some minor inconveniences, I was a profoundly happy missionary.

My post-mission life was less idyllic. Latter-day Saints are not renowned for their open-mindedness and deeper intellectual pursuit of understanding of their spirituality.

The Internet allowed for lively discussions with more liberal LDS, which assuaged some of the angst over the cognitive dissonance. But more questions forced themselves on me, such as historical cases of abuse of authority, evolution of the canon of scriptures, historicity of foundational claims, the unwillingness to embrace scientific evidence, etc., that would go unanswered satisfactorily. On recommendation from fellow Latter-day Saints, I took an interest in biblical textual and historical criticism, and instead of answering my questions, or even increasing the intellectual disconnect between faith and reason, I gradually felt liberated as I perceived all the same historical and philosophical problems in Christianity that I had been accustomed to in Mormonism. No longer was I burdened by a pious need to stifle doubts – historical and factual incongruities would lay no claim upon my world view.

My life suddenly became a lot easier and simpler. I maintained all of the outward performances of my hitherto religious life, while inwardly acquiring the freedom to read and inquire into issues I had previously found troubling. It was, for me, the secular version of being 'born again.' and it was exhilarating.

However, liberated from the need to defend positions foreign to me personally, I found it burdensome to accept a lot of the folkloric sexism and racism still prevalent among members. The official institutional efforts to deny civil liberties and even extend common decency to an entire class of people (homosexuals) became a moral and ethical issue, and without any better recourse, I resigned my membership in protest and shame.

Why, then, should I still consider myself a Mormon? It is undeniably part of my heritage and indelibly part of my personal history. It is an important part of who I am, and no one can deny me the right to self-characterization. I still love to devote myself to Mormon and Early Christian studies. Volunteer service and family are still a strong focus in my life. Moral and ethical issues, such as honesty, industriousness, and treating others charitably (including those of the other sexual persuasion) are fundamental personal mantras. Many of my most cherished friends are Mormons (LDS, FLDS, TLDS, CoC, exMo, etc). And above all, it still pains me to see my Mormon tradition being treated with disrespect whenever a fellow Mormon, out of misguided religious zeal, disparages people who think or feel differently than they do.

To help and aid, to accept and respect other people regardless of personal lifestyles, beliefs, and philosophies seems to me the ultimate Mormon thing. This is what I believe in. Hopefully, with time, most other Mormons will, too.

**Book Review****The 19th Wife****By David Ebershoff**

Random House, \$26

**Reviewed by J. C. Hunter**

Books about Mormonism continue to get the nation's attention. Published in August, *The 19th Wife* immediately sold 100,000 copies, and was favorably reviewed by *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *People* and *O* magazine, and appeared on the best-seller lists in Southern California and New York City. As *The Salt Lake Tribune* noted, "the reviews created quite a stir in a mostly quiet literary season."

Seven years ago David Ebershoff, a non-Mormon, ran across Ann Eliza Young's 1875 memoir, bearing the ungainly title of *Wife No. 19, or the Story of a Life in Bondage, Being a Complete Expose of Mormonism, and Revealing the Sorrows, Sacrifices and Sufferings of Women in Polygamy.* He immediately set out to write a novel combining Ann Eliza's experiences with a modern murder mystery set in a polygamous cult. It's an awkward format, but somehow he pulls it off.

Ann was raised in a polygamous home during the early days of the Church, and in 1868, when she was 24 and Brigham Young was 67, she became one of his wives. Five years later, citing abuse, neglect and abandonment, she filed for divorce and demanded \$200,000 of his con-

siderable fortune, which she claimed was worth \$8,000,000. He insisted that he only owned \$600,000 in property, and that he received only \$6,000 per month. In granting the divorce, the court awarded her \$500 a month plus \$3,000 in court fees. When Brigham initially refused to pay he was briefly jailed for contempt of court.

The case made Ann internationally famous, and she became a popular lecturer and crusader against polygamy, testifying before Congress in 1875, the year her book was published. The church discontinued the practice of polygamy fifteen years later, after a tumultuous struggle with the Federal government, a struggle that she certainly augmented with her book and her lectures.

In presenting the story of her life Ebershoff uses a variety of documents to capture the flavor of the time, including newspaper articles, playbills, advertisements, testimonies, and letters.

The portions of the book concerned with a modern fundamentalist sect, with ties to the culture of 19th Century Mormonism, have seemed to most reviewers to be less compelling than the portions relating to Ann Eliza Young.

This is a large book, and it is easy to see why it took the author seven years to research and write it. *Publishers Weekly*, which selected the book as its "Pick of the Week," calls it an "exquisite tour de force," and says that "with the topic of plural marriage and its shattering impact on women and powerless children in today's headlines, this novel is essential reading for anyone seeking understanding of the subject."

**AFFIRMATION MEETING POSTPONED**

A meeting that was originally scheduled in August between Church authorities and representatives of Affirmation, an organization of gay and lesbian Mormons, has been postponed until "some time in 2009," according to David Melson, an official of the group.

The purpose of the meeting was to clarify the policy of the Church regarding homosexuality. The Church had designated Fred Riley, LDS Family Services commissioner, and Harold Brown, former commissioner, to meet with the group. Riley has since left the position, which was the reason given for the postponement.

Leaders of the group want LDS general authorities to make a clear, unambiguous statement that homosexuality is not a sin or a disease, and that mothers don't cause it, Melson said.

"Too many LDS gays are shunned by their families and end up homeless, or commit suicide," he said. "We want the church to teach Mormon families to love and respect their gay sons and daughters, and to help gays reconcile their sexual orientation and their sexuality," he said.

*"The dangers I speak of come from the gay-lesbian movement, the feminist movement (both of which are relatively new), and the ever-present challenge from the so-called scholars or intellectuals. Our local leaders must deal with all three of them with ever increasingly frequency. In each case, the members who are hurting have the conviction that the Church somehow is doing something wrong to members or that the Church is not doing enough for them."*

-Apostle Boyd K. Packer, "Talk to the All-Church Coordinating Council," May 18, 1993

*“INTO THE WOODS”*  
**2008 EXMORMON FOUNDATION CONFERENCE**  
 OCTOBER 17-19, SALT LAKE CITY

Join us to listen to these speakers and meet new Exmo friends!



**Steven Hassan**

Author of “Releasing the Bonds: Empowering People to Think for Themselves,” and “Combating Cult Mind Control.” Licensed Mental Health Counselor who has established The Freedom of Mind Resource Center, [www.freedomofmind.com](http://www.freedomofmind.com). Steven’s work is with people struggling to process the trauma of leaving highly controlling religions, and helping their families understand how best to assist in that process.



**Ken Clark**

Former Bishop, former full-time employee of LDS Church Education System (27 years – CES Coordinator, Institute Director), licensed therapist. Ken’s presentation is entitled: “Lying for the Lord.”



**Lyndon Lamborn**

Cum Laude graduate of Utah State University, BS degree in Mechanical Engineering, MS in Aeronautical Engineering from Embry Riddle. Former missionary in the Belgium Brussels mission, Elders Quorum Pres., Stake Missionary Presidency, and Scoutmaster. Lyndon’s challenges to his local leadership in Mesa AZ garnered him quite a lot of publicity in the local news, and his story can be found on YouTube.



**Rick Robison**

Rick is an optometric physician in Salt Lake City. He has held many leadership positions in the church. After struggling with an injury, Rick found himself addicted to pain medication. He will share his struggles with addiction, and how that relates to the dynamics of leaving the Mormon Church.



**Paul Trane/Richard Teerlink**

Paul is a former Social worker, past supervisor of social work services in Granite School District, and elementary school principal. Father of five, grandfather of 10, past Elder’s Quorum President, and Bishop. He and his partner Richard Teerlink will be making a joint presentation. Richard taught high school chemistry and A.P. Biology in the Granite School district for 31 years. Grew up in a devout Mormon family, and served a mission in the British Isles. Now attends the Unitarian Church. With his partner Paul, he was an advisor to the West High Gay Straight Alliance for 5 years.

All registrants receive a free copy of Arza Evan's *The Keystone of Mormonism* In addition we have some VERY special items for our raffle this year!

For registration information, visit the Exmormon Foundation website [www.exmormonfoundation.org/2008Conference](http://www.exmormonfoundation.org/2008Conference)  
 or go to [www.exmormonfoundation.org](http://www.exmormonfoundation.org) and click on the conference link.

Hotel Registration:

**Embassy Suites Hotel, 110 West 600 South**  
**Salt Lake City, Utah \* Telephone: (801) 359-7800**

Book Review

## Dreams, Myths, & Reality: Utah and the American West

Wm. Allison and Susan Matt, editors

Publisher: Signature Books \$29.95

*Reviewed by Ed Bliss*

Mormons and ex-Mormons alike, regardless of where they live, are fascinated by the history of Utah and the American West. No other region of the United States has been influenced so deeply by a single religion, and few have had as colorful a past. In 1990 William Critchlow established a lecture series on Western history at Weber State University, and fourteen of those annual lectures have been included in this book.

It is impossible to generalize about a collection of unrelated lectures by so many different authors, but here are some that I found particularly interesting:

- *Contested Ground*, by Valeen Tippetts Avery — Two of the sons of Joseph Smith, David and Hyrum, traveled to Utah between 1869 and 1875, to try to convince the followers of Brigham Young that their older brother, Joseph Smith III, was the true successor to the Prophet. When Brigham Young refused to let them hold a meeting in the Tabernacle, they arranged for presentations at Salt Lake's Independence Hall, where they preached to overflow crowds. George Q. Cannon called their trips "the height of impudence," and Brigham Young told the two brothers that their mother Emma was "a liar, the damnedest liar that ever lived." The two persisted, meeting with some success and a lot of rejection. The story of their visits is gripping.

- *George Q. Cannon and the Economy of Territorial Utah*, by Davis Bitton — A member of the First Presidency, Cannon was arrested under the Edmunds act. Placed under a \$45,000 bond he jumped bond, and remained in hiding for two and a half years, then served almost six months in Federal prison. One of the most influential Mormon leaders both during and after Brigham Young's era, he was the territorial delegate to Congress, and helped to establish many business enterprises, including Zion's Bank, ZCMI, a publishing firm, a telegraph company, a retail chain, Saltair, a mining company, a power company, a salt company, a magazine, a newspaper, an insurance company, and

three railroads. He died a wealthy man.

- *Dreams, Myths, and Reality*, by Jean Bickmore White — In the lecture which gives the collection its title, the little-known story of the development of Utah's Constitution is explored.

White dispels a number of myths surrounding the process of developing the state's Constitution during the volatile period immediately following the Manifesto.

- *Sharing America, the Environmental Legacy of Stewart Udall*, by Ross Peterson — As a member of John F. Kennedy's cabinet, Interior Secretary Stewart Udall played a pivotal role in the establishment of the conservation movement. Peterson notes that his legacy included four national parks, six national monuments, eight national seashores, fifty-six national wildlife refuges, and a number of laws to protect and preserve the environment.

- *The Personal Diplomacy of Emmeline B. Wells*, by Carol Cornwall Madsen — As the most prominent Mormon woman of her time Emmeline B. Wells gained national attention as a crusader for women's rights. As editor of *Woman's Exponent* she campaigned tirelessly for women's suffrage, saying that "Mormons do not believe man has the right to deter women from enjoying the God-given privilege of free agency...man and woman are created free and equal to act in unison on all subjects and interests to both."

Other lectures in the collection include such varied subjects as native women of Utah, the New West of the 1860s, the life of Bernard DeVoto, the founding of Ogden, Mormon prophets and the environment, Utah's Nordic-language press, and reminiscences of Plain City, Utah. Although the book lacks a unifying theme, it is a collection of fascinating information about Mormonism, Utah, and the early West.



Early Mormon leaders serve time for polygamy. (George Q. Cannon sitting in the middle with white beard)

## More Website Favorites

In our last issue we ran a list of “Favorite Websites,” including Recovery from Mormonism, Richard Packham’s site, Exmormon Foundation, MormonThink, Utah Lighthouse Ministry, Mormonism-ProandCon, Post-Mormon Community, and Mormon Discussions. Several readers have suggested other “favorites” that they think should be added to that list. They are:

### **Further Light and Knowledge**

[www.thefoyer.org](http://www.thefoyer.org)

### **Mormon Curtain**

[www.mormoncurtain.com](http://www.mormoncurtain.com)

### **New Order Mormon**

[www.newordermormon.org](http://www.newordermormon.org)

### **20 Truths**

[www.trialsofascension.net/mormon.html](http://www.trialsofascension.net/mormon.html)

### **Institute for Religious Research**

[www.irr.org/](http://www.irr.org/)

### **Bob McCue’s Website**

<http://mccue.cc/bob/spirituality.htm>

### **Salamander Society**

[www.salamandersociety.com](http://www.salamandersociety.com)

### **Affirmation**

[www.affirmation.org/](http://www.affirmation.org/)

### **LDS-Mormon**

[www.lds-mormon.com](http://www.lds-mormon.com)

### **2Think**

[www.2think.org](http://www.2think.org)

### **Mormon Research Ministry**

[www.mrm.org](http://www.mrm.org)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor:

I wanted to let you know that I so much enjoyed the last issue of the *New Expositor*. I am now sharing it with others! Keep up the good work!

*Vickie Duncan*

*Dugway, Utah*

Editor:

I want to congratulate *The New Expositor* for the outstanding articles in your last issue. Richard Packham, Chad Spjut, and Ed Bliss all wrote interesting and challenging information. I read each of them several times. Chad’s “The Tipping Point: A Thirst for Truth” was especially powerful in my opinion. I am mailing you a donation to help pay for sending out *The New Expositor*. Please keep up the good work.

*Arza Evans*

*St. George, Utah*

## POST-MORMON BILLBOARD



The PostMormon organization put up its eighth billboard recently in Gilbert, Arizona. Two Phoenix area TV news stations ran stories about the sign, as did a local newspaper. The billboards simply carry the message, “You are not alone,” and the organization’s web address. More billboards are planned, with Boise or Twin Falls under consideration for the organization’s next location.

**THE NEW EXPOSITOR**  
P. O. Box 384  
Lompoc, CA 93436

**Regional and Local Exmormon Groups**

*In the past several years a number of local and regional groups of former Mormons have been established. Some of them meet weekly, some monthly, and some sporadically. Some of the ones listed below are just getting started. For information about a specific group, including the e-mail address of the contact person, visit: [www.postmormon.org](http://www.postmormon.org) and click on Our Community.*

- |                                  |                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Alaska                           | Houston, Texas                |
| Arizona                          | Idaho Falls, Idaho            |
| Australia                        | Las Vegas, Nevada             |
| Cache Valley, Utah               | Mt. Carmel, Utah              |
| Calgary Canada                   | North Idaho                   |
| Charlotte, NC                    | Ogden, Utah                   |
| Chesapeake, VA                   | Pocatello, Idaho              |
| Colorado Springs/Denver          | Portland, Oregon              |
| South & North Davis County, Utah | Sacramento, California        |
| Ecuador                          | Salem, Oregon                 |
| Edmonton, Canada                 | San Diego, California         |
| France                           | Sanpete County, Utah          |
| Hampton Roads, VA                | Seattle, Washington           |
|                                  | Southern Utah                 |
|                                  | Sweden                        |
|                                  | Tacoma, Washington            |
|                                  | United Kingdom                |
|                                  | Utah County                   |
|                                  | Utah State University         |
|                                  | Western Colorado/Eastern Utah |